

Infectious Mononucleosis (Mono)

What is infectious mononucleosis (mono)?

Mono is a contagious viral infection, most commonly caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). In the United States, as much as 95% of adults between 35 and 40 years have been infected by EBV. It is diagnosed by blood tests.

Who gets mono?

Anyone can get mono, but it is most common in teens and young adults. Many children become infected with EBV, and these infections usually cause no symptoms at all. When infection occurs during adolescence or young adulthood, 35% to 50% develop symptoms.

How is mono spread?

Mono is spread person to person by saliva or by objects or hands exposed to saliva.

How long is mono contagious?

The mono virus can remain in saliva for one year or more after infection, even after symptoms are gone. The person should be considered contagious all this time. Some people can become carriers, when the virus reactivates and is able to be spread again after the initial illness. Reactivation usually occurs without symptoms of illness.

What are the symptoms of mono?

Symptoms begin four to six weeks after exposure. They include sore throat, fever, swollen glands in the neck, armpits and groin, and feeling sick or tired. The liver and spleen may become enlarged. It takes several weeks for most people to recover, however some take months to regain their normal level of activity.

What is the treatment for mono?

There is no specific treatment for infectious mononucleosis, other than treating the symptoms. Most cases need only rest. No anti-viral drugs or vaccines are available.

Are there complications from mono?

Complications are rare. Infectious mononucleosis is almost never fatal. If you notice unusual behaviors or symptoms, contact your physician.

How can mono be prevented?

Good hand washing and hygiene are important. Avoid drinking or eating from a common container, mouth-to-mouth kissing, and sharing any articles contaminated with saliva, i.e., gum, candy, pacifiers, or eating utensils. Make sure to cough or sneeze into a tissue and then dispose of tissue properly into trash can. The use of handkerchiefs is not recommended. Wash toys shared by young children that may become contaminated.

Calhoun County Public Health Department

190 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite A100
Battle Creek, Michigan 49014
Tel: (269) 969-6383
Fax: (269) 969-6488

How do I get more information on mono?

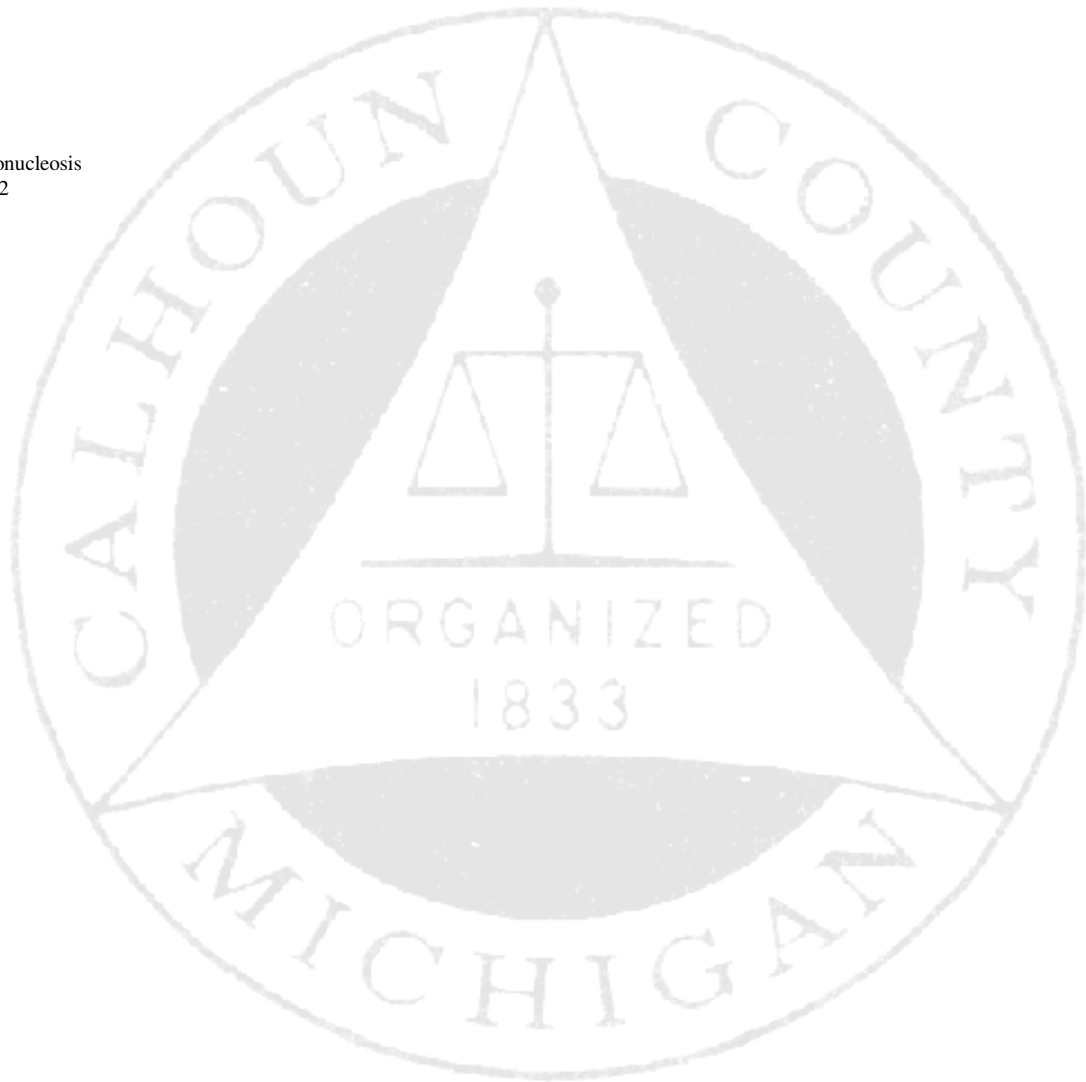
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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/ebv.htm>

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

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